

Indiana State University

2004 - 2005 Academic Annual Report

Department of African & African American Studies

Year in Review

Accomplishments

As you have heard, increasing public awareness of Indiana State University's accomplishments is crucial to building student enrollment, influencing policy makers, and developing a place of pre-eminence in the Midwest. What do you consider to be your department's 5-10 top accomplishments for the 2004-2005 year that will help contribute to this effort?

1. One of our May graduates has been accepted to law school next fall at the University of Maryland.
2. As I wrote last year, public awareness may not be interested in "efficiency and productivity," but we understand that the IHEC is. In Fall 2004, the Department had only two regular faculty teaching because one person was on sabbatical leave. These two faculty taught enough students to have the Department ranked first in the College of Arts and Sciences and third in the entire University for the number of students taught per tenure-track faculty member (339 SCH or 113 students). Moreover, the average SCH taught by our 1.33 FTE part-time faculty last fall was 559 SCH per FTE. [OSPIRE Fall 2004 Faculty Load and Distribution of Effort Report]. Lastly, by August 2005 our three-person department will have graduated six majors this year (one last December, two this May, and three in August); two of these students are "first" majors and four are "second" majors. I believe that our productivity in teaching should help ISU "influence policy makers" by demonstrating what we accomplish with limited resources.

Research and Scholarship

What is your assessment of accomplishments in the area of research and scholarship? Are you satisfied overall? In which areas do you feel your department does particularly well? In which areas do you feel your department needs to improve?

We are presenting at national professional conferences at an appropriate pace. In terms of publication, I would like to see an increase in the pace of publishing articles in peer-reviewed journals. Now that the two journal faculty are both beyond their second year, I expect to see each faculty member publish at least one article per year. Moreover, I expect to see a book-length manuscript originating from the senior faculty member's sabbatical leave last fall.

Grants, Contracts & Off Campus Professional Service

What is your assessment of accomplishments in the area of grants, contracts, and off campus professional service? Are you satisfied overall? In which areas do you feel your department does particularly well? In which areas do you feel your department needs to improve?

One faculty member submitted a proposal for an extramural research grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. The proposal was not funded. In the area of off-campus professional service, our senior faculty member is a consultant for the Presbyterian Committee on Higher Education, a regional representative and committee chair in the National Council of Black Studies, and a manuscript reviewer for The National Language Resource Center (Madison, WI). Our junior faculty made appropriate on-campus service contributions this year. I anticipate that they will move into community and professional service in their third year at ISU and beyond. The faculty participated in the annual celebration of Dr. Martin Luther King's life and achievements. Our

off-campus professional service was in a holding pattern this year because of a sabbatical leave and our internal focus as we implemented our revised curriculum. I hope that all faculty will engage in annual community service next year, which in turn will help us create connections for service learning/community engagement opportunities for our students.

Best Practices

Describe the progress your unit has made thus far. Were you able to take these steps? What steps or goals have been particularly difficult to achieve and why? What practices, actions, initiatives are you doing that could be considered eminent?

We completed initial preparations for a study abroad course in Ghana this summer, but we were unable to offer it due to cost and under-subscription. With one faculty member on sabbatical in the fall and a reduction in our allocation for part-time instruction in the spring, our faculty were stretched to the maximum teaching our students. We did not make progress on experiential learning and community engagement activities to be added to our courses. Faculty are working with MAPS and McNair students on ongoing collaborative research projects.

Student Credit Hours

What did you learn? What steps will you take during 2004-05 to meet your department's student credit hour target by fall 2005?

Our department ranked number 3 in the entire university in the average number of student credit hours taught per tenure-track faculty member in Fall 2004. (This was down from number 1 in Fall 2003 because one faculty member was on sabbatical leave.) Per person, our tenure-track faculty teach more students than any other department in the College of Arts and Sciences. We accomplished this with each faculty member teaching one lower-division general education course, and two faculty teaching a second or third large general education course as well. HOWEVER, we must also serve our majors, and we agreed to serve ISU's distance student population by offering a web-based version of our popular 300-level general education course. As I wrote last year, as a three-person department we can't serve all masters at once. Reduced to only two regular faculty teaching last fall, we were unable to make progress on introducing community engagement activities into our upper-level courses. Again, as last year, multiple, "unprioritized," and unfunded university mandates continue to be a problem for us, but we are committed to being good, participating campus citizens to the greatest extent possible given our personnel constraints and our commitment to serving our majors and general education students.

Budget

Identify and describe any collaborative efforts that have been undertaken by your department with other academic or administrative units to maximize resources to meet departmental goals. Please also consider collaborative opportunities with external partners.

We co-sponsored with the Department of Philosophy an on-campus visit by a scholar of religion in Africa, and we contributed financially to co-sponsoring ISU's Human Rights Day organized by the Department of Sociology. This year we did not seek any partnerships with off-campus partners.

Outreach

What are the outreach opportunities for your discipline? (non-traditional modes of delivery and timing, etc)

We again offered a web-based version of AFRI 325 (Jazz, Blues, and Rock and Roll) this spring. We did not expand the number of "seats" in the course for Spring 2005, but after a second time

through the course and now with better developed arrangements with the Department of Music, I think that if Music has an appropriately qualified graduate student, we will be able to double the number of distance students we can serve with AFRI 325.

Assessment

For each program in the department, provide one or two examples of how the program is using assessment and evaluation (student outcomes, program review, and/or accreditation) to enhance student learning and program strength this year.

Last year's assessment activities led to the reconceptualization of three of our required courses, deleting one and refocusing two others. The revised curriculum was approved last fall, and the new "senior year" two-semester sequence was taught for the first time. This summer we will assess the effectiveness of the refocused courses. We will introduce a new 200-level course next fall, but we will not be able to assess its effectiveness within the curriculum for a couple of years.

Strategic Initiatives

Development Activities

What steps have you taken to support development activities in your department? How can your efforts be supported?

This year we are in temporary quarters in the English Department, and we continue to focus on increasing the number of majors in our program without reducing the number of general education students we serve. Next year we will move back into the renovated Stalker Hall, and I hope that we can use our success with graduates and our new "digs" to begin a modest development campaign. We have the Lyda endowment for an annual scholarship. We have already invited Mrs. Lyda to visit our new space in the early fall, and I hope to prepare a small "development" brochure that we will send to alumni, friends, and potential donors for additional scholarship support for our students.

Experiential Learning

Please provide examples of experiential learning in which your department was engaged in 2004-2005.

See earlier sections of this report, especially the sections on Student Credit Hours.

Future Goals

Future Goals

The University is highlighting experiential learning, community engagement, and eminent programs as aspects of our campus that will attract students and resources. How is your department planning to contribute to these strategic initiatives in ways that will help ISU be recognized as a Pre-eminent University?

As I wrote last year, we are a primary deliverer of courses in U.S. multi-cultural studies. This year we introduced a new course on African music, and next year we will introduce a new course on African cultures. We were unsuccessful in our request to hire a new faculty member with expertise in the African diaspora in the Caribbean and Latin America. Frankly, we are somewhat frustrated in our desire to be more of a "player" in the University's institutional initiatives because we must devote so much of our time and energy to serving current on-campus and distance students with only three faculty. The steady incremental increase in the number of students majoring in our department (19 counting the two May 2005 graduates) demonstrates modest but continued growing interest among ISU students in African and African American Studies. The interest is divided among

students who select our program as their “first” major and those who wish to complement another major with ours as a “second” major. We believe that we can offer students who come to ISU for a degree that will “get them a job” an educational experience that will include both theoretical and real world experience with cultural diversity which in turn will provide them with a skill set that will make them attractive to future employers and will help them become productive contributors to an increasingly ethnically diverse society. This is a major challenge for a three-person program, but we are committed to meeting it, and we believe that our doing so will enhance ISU’s stature in the public’s eye.